

Popular Songs of the Hamírpur District in Bundelkhand, N. W. P.—By
VINCENT A. SMITH, B. A., B. C. S.

In the belief that any contribution which serves to add to our knowledge of the languages and customs of India, will be welcome to the Society, I now submit a sample of the popular songs of the Hamírpur District in the local dialect. Nowhere can the real popular language be better studied than in the songs which are constantly in the mouths of the people, and these compositions further illustrate vividly the domestic customs and manners of the masses.

Should the specimen now submitted prove acceptable, I propose to continue the series from time to time. I have already collected a large number of songs of various kinds, but at present I have not leisure to work up my materials. So far as I am aware, none of these songs has ever before been reduced to writing. They have now been taken down by my paṇḍit, who is a native of this district, from the lips of persons who learned them by tradition. The paṇḍit was instructed to record accurately, without alteration or correction of any kind, the sounds which he heard, and I believe that my instructions have been carried out. At some future time, I hope to analyze the dialectic peculiarities of the songs which I am now collecting. In order to render the following set of ditties intelligible, I prefix an abstract of the

Legend of Hardaul.

Hardaul, a son of the famous Bir Singh Deo Bundelá of Orchhá, was born at D a t i y á.* His brother Jhahjár Singh suspected him of undue intimacy with his wife, and at a feast poisoned him with all his followers. After this tragedy, it happened that the daughter of Kunjávatí, the sister of Jhahjár and Hardaul, was about to be married. Kunjávatí accordingly sent an invitation to Jhahjár Singh, requesting him to attend the wedding. He refused and mockingly replied that she had better invite her favourite brother Hardaul. Thereupon she went in despair to his tomb and lamented aloud. Hardaul from below answered her cries, and said that he would come to the wedding and make all arrangements. The ghost kept his promise and arranged the nuptials as befitted the honour of his house. Subsequently, he visited at night the bedside of Akbar, and besought the emperor to command *chabútras* to be erected and honour paid to him in every village throughout the empire, promising that if he were duly honoured, a wedding should never be marred by storm or rain, and that no one who

* Bir Singh Deo died in 1627 A. D. For some account of him, see *Gazetteer*, N. W. P., Vol. I, article Orchha; Áin translation, I, pp. XXV, 488.

first presented a share of his meal to Hardaul should ever want for food. Akbar complied with these requests, and since that time Hardaul's ghost has been worshipped in every village. He is chiefly honoured at weddings and in Baisákh, during which month the women, especially those of the lower castes, visit his *chabútra* and eat there. His *chabútra* is always built outside the village. On the day* but one before the arrival of a wedding procession, the women of the family worship the gods and Hardaul, and invite them to the wedding. If any signs of a storm appear, Hardaul is propitiated with songs.

I am told that it is a common saying that cholera has only been known since the introduction of Hardaul worship.

SONGS IN HONOUR OF HARDAUL.

हरदौल का गीत ।

I.

१ दतिया के लला हरदौल तुम्हारी कजा जगत जाहिर भई
कहना से दल ऊमहे कहना परो है मिलान दतिया से दल
ऊमहे एरक परो है मिलान एरक को क्या मेलनो लाला खर
पानी को टूट ।

लौटके मैली टकटकी लाला चरेँ वकड़े दूब ।

लाला निकरे देश का देत भनेजन भात बुन्देला देशा के रैया
राव के तुम्हारी ।

दखिन वजी तरवार । १ ।

II.

२ जलमत खाये गोतिया हेटे खाये माई बाप ।

चन्दन रूख कटायके राजा माई के ।

दाग दिवाव ।

माई बाप काहू के सदा न जीवैँ भैया दाहिनी बांह ।

अंसुवन भीँ जैँ चूनरी रोय करे कुइलान विष दार मा विष भात
म। विष की बनाई रसखीर ।

गाँवँन २ चौतरा लाला देशन २ नाम बुन्देला देशा के रैया राव
के तुम्हारा जय राखैँ भगवान । २ ।

* This day is known by the name of *tel*.

III.

३ पाँच बताशा नौबोरा लाला यही ठाकुर का भोग ।
 काँधले घौरा काँधले मोरी बहिनी ।
 विसूरत जाय ।
 आँधो पानी जिन करौ लाला जिन ।
 बरसावो मेह ।
 बुन्देला देशा के रैया राव के लाला ।
 भौजी के परम अधार । ३ ।

IV.

४ अपना बैठे राह मा लाला औरन को पक़्ताय ।
 माटी को यो ठेकरा लाला धरो आदमी नाम ।
 बुन्देला देशा के रैया राव के तुन्हारी ।
 दखिन बजी दरवार । ४ ।

Translation.

I.

Hardaul, the darling of Datiyá,² your fame is brilliant in the world.
 Whence comes the host³ exultingly, where has the halt been made?
 From Datiyá comes the exulting host, at Erichh has the halt been made.

At Erichh why did you halt, dear boy, where fodder and water fail?
 Turn back and halt at Takṭakan, dear boy, where your cattle may graze on dúb⁴ grass.

Our⁵ darling comes out on a long journey, to offer his sister's daughter boiled rice.

You are a Bundelá chief of chiefs, in the south your sword has been busy.

II.

At⁶ the time of your birth, your clansmen, your father, and mother perished.

O King! have sandal wood cut and fire put to your mother's pyre.

No man's father and mother live for ever;⁷ a brother is as a right arm.

With tears of unrestrained weeping the garment⁸ was wet through: poison⁹ in the pulse, poison in the boiled rice, of poison was the rice-milk made.

In every village, darling, is your *chabútra*, in every region your name is known.

You are a Bundelá chief of chiefs, God grant you victory!

III.

Five¹⁰ sweetmeats, and nine balls of betel and *pán*, darling, these form the repast of the god.

'Take,¹¹ take your load on your shoulders, white bullock; my sister will be thinking of me.'

Darling, don't send storm or shower, don't send rain. You are a Bundelá chief of chiefs, the best support of your brother's wife.

IV.

Darling, you sit by the roadside yourself, and take thought for others.¹²

To¹³ an earthen potsherd, darling, is given the name of man. You are a Bundelá chief of chiefs, in the south your sword has been busy.

Notes.

¹ These songs are sung by women, the specimens now given were obtained by my Pandit from *pardah-nishin* women.

² Dativá, now a small separate state in Bundelkhand, was formerly included in Orchha; *vide* N. W. P. Gazetteer, *sub voce*.

³ The verb *umhná* conveys the idea of abundance, or exuberance, and of joy or exultation. The allusion here is to the troop of attendants whom Hardaul's ghost led to the wedding.

⁴ A fine kind of grass (*Cynodon dactylon*).

⁵ It is the duty of the brother of the bride's mother (*mámú*) to make this offering to the bride on the first day of the wedding ceremonies.

⁶ Hardaul's relatives died when he was born.

⁷ Hardaul performed a great service to his sister by doing the honours of her daughter's wedding.

⁸ A spotted garment (*chúnri*), worn by women.

⁹ Alludes to the mode of Hardaul's death.

¹⁰ *Batásá* is a special variety of sweetmeat. All the principal kinds are enumerated in a *halwái's* song.

Ten *birás* make a *gilauri*, and 100 *birás* make a *doli*. The meaning of the verse is that Hardaul should make the usual offering to the gods before starting.

¹¹ Hardaul has now started, and admonishes the refractory bullock which carries the wedding gifts.

¹² *i. e.*, your sister.

¹³ *i. e.*, Man is but dust, and like Hardaul all must die.

